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ABSTRACT

The project described was initiated in 1974 by an institution for mentally retarded citizens to expand its library services from a poorly equipped library for school age residents to an adapted service appropriate for mentally retarded adults in a public library type setting. Project goals were directed toward improving institution life, preparing residents for possible community placements, and to provide information to public as well as institutional librarians on the provision of library services to the mentally retarded. Implementation of the project included hiring a library professional, expanding library hours, providing outreach services, refurnishing the library, and developing the collection. Evaluation of each phase of the project indicated success in meeting most of the objectives. A slide/tape presentation reviewing the project has been developed for use by any public and institutional librarians who might be interested in the creation and expansion of such services. (MBR)

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FINAL REPORT

Library Services and Construction Act

Title I

Projects
#75-26-I
#76-48-I

DEVELOPING A PUBLIC LIBRARY TYPE SERVICE ADAPTED FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CITIZENS

29 August 77

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

PENNHURST CENTER

SPRING CITY, PA 19475

IR006900

For about ten years, prior to 1974, a minimal library service was provided to only the school age citizens of the center. This was in the form of a poorly equipped school library in a small second floor room. In September, 1974 the library was made a separate department from the school with the purpose of serving all age citizens of the center. The location of the library was moved to a ground floor room more easily accessible to the physically handicapped citizens. The philosophy of Pennhurst Center was that it was a community of individual citizens. Thus, the new library was named Pennhurst Citizens' Library. The library was to function more like a public library than a school library. Also, the library was to provide an adapted service appropriate for retarded adults.

Providing the desired type of library service was difficult with the limited amount of staff, equipment, furnishings and library materials available. A grant proposal was written incorporating the ideas for this new type of library services; and fortunately it was accepted and funded. Implementation of the grant included: hiring an additional staff member with the title, Library Assistant; expanding the hours of operation to include evening and Saturday open times; increasing the number of citizens served including providing on-living area library sessions for those who could not come to the library; refurnishing the library with attractive, good quality furnishings to replace the drab institutional furniture; purchasing carefully selected, appropriate books to bolster the existing collection; purchasing up-to-date, well-done AV materials; and purchasing an adequate collection of audio-visual equipment that could be useful in providing literature and information in other than book form.

The ten major objectives of the grant were:

1. After having been exposed to the presence of the library, the citizen will come to the library on his own (or request services if he is unable to come).
2. After having gotten used to the library and acquainted with the staff, a citizens will display freedom of choice by choosing a magazine, book, record, or filmstrip on his own.
3. After having been exposed to the concept of book borrowing, the citizen will express the desire to have a library card.
4. After having obtained a library card, the citizen will borrow and return books.
5. When a citizen borrows a book, he will read it, look at the pictures, or ask someone to read it to him; and he will gain some understanding of the materials.
6. After the presentation of a story (by means of story hour, puppet play, movie, or sound-filmstrip) by library staff, a citizen will display some understanding of the material.
7. After having been motivated by the library, a citizen will request and participate in reading skills instruction.
8. After attending voluntary library classes, a citizen will be able to locate various materials and make some use of reference books.
9. After exposure to the comfortable, attractive surroundings of the library and the supportive individual approach of library staff, a citizen will exhibit more normal, mature behavior. A citizen may comment voluntarily in his feelings about the library.
10. After exposure to the presence of the library and the materials available there, other institution staff (teachers, therapists, etc.) will borrow materials to use with citizens thus helping the library serve more citizens.

The grant project had two general aims directed towards life within the institution itself. The first was to provide an appropriately adapted, public library type service to the citizens during their stay at Pennhurst Center. The second was to provide a calm, comfortably furnished, stimulating atmosphere of enrichment to combat the deprivation factors of institutional living.

The grant project also had two aims directed toward possible community placements of citizens. The first was to acquaint these individuals with libraries and how to use them; and thus to encourage them to use libraries as well as other public facilities. The second was to use library materials to present community orientation subjects.

Another general aim of this project was to provide motivation to encourage mentally retarded individuals to learn, improve or maintain reading skills.

The final aim of this project was to provide information to public as well as institutional librarians on, "providng library services to mentally retarded citizens"; and, hopefully, to encourage the expansion of such services.

The Coordinator of Library Services at Pennhurst served as the Project Director. Assisting in the selecting and ordering of materials and equipment, as well as implementation of the grant was a Library Technician on the staff of Pennhurst Center. A Library Assistant I was hired using grant funds to handle the greatest portion of additional work created by the grant. The Coordinator kept accounting records for the grant with the assistance of the Pennhurst Accounting Department. Dr. Youngberg, Superintendent, served as the legal representative of the Center by signing the contracts and other documents.

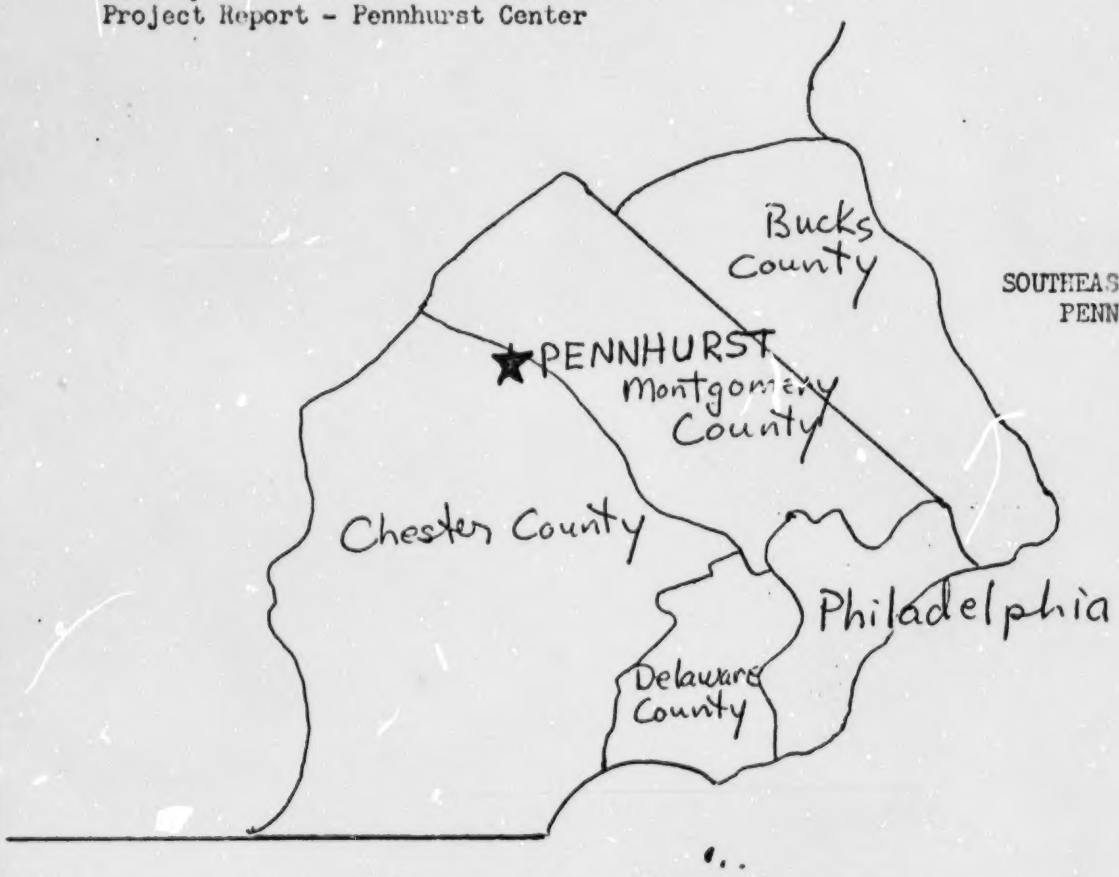
One unique characteristic of this grant project was the realization that mentally retarded citizens can benefit from Library Services. Behavior modification, teaching self-help skills, developmental training and vocational training are recognized aspects of the educational process for mentally retarded citizens. However, it has generally been ignored that these individuals have varying degrees of potential for creativity and enjoyment of literature, art, music and nature. Library Services can provide for the initiation and development of these interests in mentally retarded citizens.

Another unique characteristic of this grant was the concept that mentally retarded citizens have a right to library services, just as all other sectors of the community do. These individuals have been unconsciously deprived of library services in the past. This has been due to libraries not being aware of the potentials that these citizens have and not being equpped to serve them.

An additional unique characteristic of this project is that the library was set up primarily as a community public library adapted for the Pennhurst Center community. Generally, the few libraries that have existed within MR institutions in the past have been operated by the school library model.

The one major influence of social conditions in the area that influenced this project was the concept of "striving towards normalization of life style for mentally retarded citizens". This concept has become more wide spread in recent years; and is encouraged by advocate groups for the mentally retarded. This grant project was in line with that concept.

This grant project was conducted by the Library Services Department of Pennhurst Center with the cooperation and encouragement of the Special Library Service Division of the PA State Library and the Chester County District Library Center.



LOCATION OF PENNHURST CENTER AND AREA SERVED

D. Evaluation Report

Because of unfortunate delays in beginning this grant project, which I wrote in December 74 and planned to begin in July 75, our statistical reports for the actual dates of the grant may not show the full impact. Rather than wait for the grant to begin, I started implementing the goals, objectives, methods and evaluative techniques as much as possible (without grant staff, furniture, equipment and materials) early in 1975. The grant did not officially begin until March 76.

Making the presence of the library known to the citizens and staff was very easy and effective. At the very beginning of the grant, we displayed a collection of large photographs of library activities in the lobby of the Administration Building. In addition, staff contacted other staff and citizens concerning the availability of the library program. As a result, the library has generally served the maximum number of citizens that staff could handle in both classes and open times.

The library schedule consists of 23 regularly scheduled 45 minute classes that occur once each week. This totals 17¼ hours per week of classes. Seven of these classes take place on the living area for citizens who cannot easily get to the library. The remainder take place in the library. In addition, there are 18 hours per week of open time. This includes; 11:00 a.m. to noon each weekday, 2:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. each week day except Wednesday, Monday and Wednesday evenings 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., and Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Any citizen who is able, may come to the library and participate in activities at these times.

At the beginning of the project there were already 114 citizens enrolled in regularly scheduled classes. With the additional staff member provided by the grant, citizens enrolled increased by 25 to 139 within the first three months. By the end of the project the total enrolled increased to 155. Of these, on the living area classes increased from two to seven; and the citizens involved from 20 to 48.

The new position also allowed us to expand our open time, most notably by adding the Saturday hours. The number of individuals making use of open hours at the beginning of the grant was 65 to 70. With the conclusion of the grant we were averaging about 100 individuals per month. These citizens were averaging about 4 open time visits per month. In February 77, the library set a record of 473 visits by citizens during open hours. During open hours on Thursdays from September to May, we showed films whenever possible. Generally, 40 to 50 citizens attended these film programs.

Attached is Annex A which includes copies of the sixteen Monthly Statistics + Reports for the months of the grant project. Complete enrollment and attendance data can be obtained from this source.

The ability to make choices is often absent or very limited in many institutionalized retarded citizens. This ability is impaired by the institutional routine as well as the retardation. This routine includes when to get up in the morning, when to eat, what to eat, when to go to activities, what activities to go to and when to go to bed. In recent years, Pennhurst Center has allowed capable citizens more and more choices, such as how to have their haircut, what clothes to wear and more freedom of movement about the institution and nearby communities (for some). But, many citizens are still greatly lacking in their ability to make choices.

The grant project provided various opportunities for citizens to make choices. The most obvious one was that when the library was open, they could choose to come rather than watch T.V. or do something else. As I mentioned previously, many did choose to use the library during open hours.

Additionally, the library provided a setting in which there were choices to make and the citizens were free to make them. They were able to decide what they wanted to do; browse through books, look at magazines, see a sound filmstrip, listen to records, or just sit quietly and relax. Then they had to decide which book to look at or borrow, which magazine, which filmstrip or which record to use. Using, "listening to records", as an example activity and realizing that a particular citizen had no idea of how or what to choose, we handled the situation in this manner. First, we presented him/her with a variety of types of records and different artists. Secondly, we gave the citizen choices between two records, then three etc.

Many citizens developed their ability to make choices to varying degrees. Some choose activities and materials independently; some need assistance; some need a limited choice (2 or 3 items), and some must have a great deal of direction from staff. Attached is Annex B which includes selected examples of staff observations concerning the making of choices by citizens.

Many of the citizens caught on to the idea of borrowing books from the library and requested a library card. When the grant began there were 89 citizens with borrowing privileges. This was due to my beginning to implement the grant prior to its legal starting date. Of course we started building up to this number from zero when the library first opened. By May, 1977 we had reached a high of 137 citizens with library cards that permitted them to borrow books. The fact that the number of card holders increased even that much is significant as a number of our more able card holders left the center for community placements during the grant project. The list of card holders was always subject to deletions and additions as new people became interested and other people left the center or dropped out of the program. In June 1977, the number of card holders was 115, a decrease from the May high. This was due to our removing inactive individuals when we gave out new cards. Refer to Annex A for statistics on library cards.

The process of giving out library cards to institutionalized, mentally retarded citizens and allowing them to borrow books was an exercise in having responsibility and being trusted, as well as providing needed stimulation. They were permitted to borrow one book at a time for up to one week. After certain citizens proved themselves to be very responsible, they were permitted to borrow up to three books at a time. If there was any doubt concerning a certain citizen's ability to be a successful book borrower, this individual was started out with paper back books for the first two or three weeks. If he/she was successful, then the individual got a card and was permitted to borrow any regular library book. The response of the citizens was great. Being trusted and given the responsibility of borrowing a book made them feel good about themselves. Most of the citizens lived up to this trust more successfully than we ever expected. In addition, there was a steady increase in the demand to borrow books. During the sixteen months of the grant, the circulation of books to citizens reached record high figures ten times. The highest was 409 books borrowed during May 77. Refer to the increase in circulation over the past three fiscal years as given on page 2. Of the 5276 books borrowed by citizens during the grant project, only 36 were lost. This figure is better than what many public libraries would have. It certainly proves that mentally retarded citizens can be successful book borrowers. Refer to Annex A for complete statistics on book borrowing by citizens.

While we encouraged the increase in the volume of book borrowing, we were also concerned with the quality of book usage. Only a small minority of the citizens at Pennhurst Center can read. Of course we made a special effort to include these citizens in our library program. During the grant project, there were approximately thirty to forty citizens involved who could read at varying levels ranging from 1st or 2nd grade to a sixth or seventh grade level. These individuals borrowed books on their level and read these on their own, occasionally asking us for some assistance. The remaining majority of our book borrowers used the books in two ways. First, we lent them books that were worthwhile simply for the illustrations or photographs contained. Secondly, we let them take books on their interests that required reading; and encouraged them to ask an aide, nurse, therapist, foster grandparent, other staff member or volunteer worker to read and discuss the books with them. Both these approaches were quite successful. The positive reaction of many other Pennhurst Center employees to helping citizens use their books was very encouraging.

In order to evaluate book usage, we used a spot checking system. We randomly checked the usage of books as they were returned. This was done by verbally questioning or discussing with the citizens the contents of the book. As a result of each of

these spot checks, the staff member assigned a score of 0 to 4 as their evaluation of the usage the citizen made of that book. A total of 582 spot checks were made. This amounts to 11% of the books lent to citizens during the grant project. The results of the book use evaluations as well as the meaning of the scores were as follows:

Score	Meaning of Score	# of Occurrences	% of Total
0	No awareness of book	11	2%
1	Knows title or subject of the book	78	13%
2	Read or looked at most of the book and can relate one or two things about it.	166	29%
3	Read or looked at most of the book and understands it fairly well/ can answer some questions on content.	208	36%
4	Read or looked at book thoroughly/understands the story or subject and can answer several questions on it.	119	20%
	Total:	582	100%

These results prove that generally the mentally retarded citizens who used the library at Pennhurst Center made good to excellent use of the books that they borrowed. Providing a library service to such individuals is certainly a worthwhile endeavor. The availability of library services to the mentally retarded affords them with a valuable stimulus toward raising their level of functioning.

Part of the grant project was to test the comprehension of our citizens for various presentations done in the regularly scheduled classes. These presentations were done by various means including story hours, puppet plays, picture books, sound filmstrips, movies and picture-story sets. During the last two quarters (six months) of the grant we did a formalized Comprehension Evaluation Project. We selected two groups of literature; level A for our higher functioning participants, and level B for our lower functioning participants. Within each of those levels there were ten items. Comprehension scores for five items within a level were obtained by verbal responses to questioning. The scores for the remaining five items were obtained by having the citizens do simple worksheets. The verbal responses were kept on charts set up by classes. On these sheets, four responses were recorded for each citizen on each piece of literature. A "+" indicates a correct response and a "o" indicates an incorrect response. See Annex C for copies of all, "Comprehension Survey on Verbal Responses" sheets. Also, listed on these sheets after the verbal responses, are the worksheets that the individual did. Annex D contains a complete set of the five level A worksheets that required a citizen to print or write the correct answer to each question. Annex E contains a complete set of the five level B worksheets that required a citizen to mark a certain picture with a particular color crayon to indicate their responses to the questions.

In selecting the materials to use we included one or more of each of the following types of easy books; a realistic story involving people, a folk tale, a story about animals behaving like people, and a story about animals acting in their natural manner.

We also used a set of transparencies with stories divided into four scenes each. The citizens had to determine in what sequence these simple stories happened. The materials included six picture books, three filmstrips and one set of transparencies for each level. The titles used are listed below. Following each title is the percent of comprehension that our citizens, as a group, had for that item.

LEVEL A

	WORKSHEETS	COMPREHENSION RATE
	Books	
1.	Prince Bertram the Bad by A. Lobel	86%
2.	Little Bear by M. Sendak	88%
3.	The Accident by C. Carrick	98%
4.	The Barn by J. Schoenherr	88%
	Filmstrips	
5.	A Boy, a Dog and a Frog by M. Mayer	95%
	VERBAL RESPONSES	
	Books	
6.	Blaze and the Forest Fire by C.W. Anderson	73%
7.	The Plant Sitter by G. Zion	57%
	Filmstrips	
8.	The Prince and the Princess by Eye Gate	68%
9.	The Changing World of Work by Lollipop Prod.	77%
	Transparencies	
10.	Sequential Stories	88%

LEVEL P

	WORKSHEETS	
	Books	
1.	The Chick and the Duckling by M. Ginsberg	75%
2.	The Big Honey Hunt by S. & J. Berenstein	77%
3.	Thruway by A. & H. Rockwell	75%
4.	Wake Up City by A. Tresselt	89%
	Filmstrips	
5.	A Boy, a Dog and a Frog by M. Mayer	93%

	VERBAL RESPONSES	COMPREHENSION RATE
	Books	
6.	The Very Hungry Caterpillar by E. Carle	57%
7.	The Lazy Bear by B. Wildsmith	75%
	Filmstrips	
8.	The Little Red Hen by Singer SVE	53%
9.	The Gingerbread Man by Singer SVE	63%
	Transparencies	
10.	Sequential Stories	55%

Generally, the combined comprehension rates of all our participating citizens for the eighteen items (2 appear in both level A and level B) were quite good. This indicates that they were comprehending the material presented. There was only one item in level A and three items in level B that had combined comprehension rates lower than 60%. Notice the two items that were presented to both groups. The worksheet on the filmstrip, A Boy, A Dog and A Frog had a 95% comprehension rate for level A and a 93% comprehension rate for level B. There was no significant difference. The verbal responses to the Sequential Story transparencies was a different situation, however. Level A had an 88% comprehension rate while level B had a 55% rate. This was probably the result of the difference between the two groups in the level of analytical thinking required to order events in proper sequence. The items were presented to various numbers of the total 95 participating citizens. The presentations were made by three different staff members on various dates over a period of four months. Presentations generally lasted 10 to 15 minutes followed by another 10 to 15 minutes for the verbal responses or doing worksheets. Considering the variety of individual citizens, staff members, times of presentations and pieces of literature involved; I feel that the comprehension rates arrived at are reliable.

Of the 95 participating citizens, twenty were not given individual comprehension scores due to insufficient data. These individuals missed classes and as a result did not have a minimum of responses to 5 pieces of literature with at least one of each of the two types of responses, verbal and worksheet. The remaining 75 citizens were given comprehension scores on an individual basis for all the pieces of literature for which they gave responses. See Annex C for copies of the "Comprehension Survey of Verbal Responses and Worksheets." The names appear in the left column. The far right column contains the combined percentage of comprehension for all verbal and worksheet responses. The comprehension rate for citizens responding to the level A materials ranged from two low scores of 53% to six perfect scores of 100%. Eighty percent of these citizens had comprehension rates of better than 75%. The percentage of comprehension for citizens responding to the level B materials ranged from one 10% to one 100%. Forty-nine percent of these citizens had comprehension rates of better than 75%. The results of the Comprehension Evaluation Project reiterate the results of the spot checking of

borrowed books. The mentally retarded citizens receiving these library services were comprehending the materials presented. This aspect of the library program was certainly worthwhile and very successful. A good number of the citizens who participated especially enjoyed doing the worksheets. They seemed to gain a feeling of self satisfaction from completing these.

The idea of providing reading skills instruction on a formal basis had to be dropped. This was due to the fact that there was a great demand for us to provide basic library services to as many citizens as possible. With only three staff and limited time, we could only accomplish so much. We had to set priorities. For a staff member to spend adequate time in reading instruction with 3 or 4 citizens, it would take basic programming time away from possibly 20 other citizens. Thus, we were not able to accomplish this objective.

The potential for our citizens to learn traditional library use skills or to use reference books was very limited. I mentioned earlier that the issuing of library cards and book borrowing objectives were achieved and were very successful. Probably a little over half of the books borrowed were easy fiction books and the remainder were low reading level or adult photograph type nonfiction books. Most of our borrowers require staff assistance in locating books to choose from. Some of the higher functioning citizens are aware of which sections of shelves contain, "made-up stories", which contain, "books about real things", which contain, "books about real people", and which contain dictionaries and encyclopedias. We obtained a set of "Dewey Blocks" and placed the appropriate blocks on top of the section of shelves where the corresponding books were found. "Dewey Blocks" include one large block for each section of the Dewey Decimal System with appropriate pictures and numbers on each of the sides of the blocks. The shelves were labeled with the appropriate Dewey numbers. Nineteen of the higher functioning citizens participated in a training program in order to learn where things were located in the library and how to use the Dewey Blocks to find certain sections of books on particular subjects. See Annex F for an example of the worksheet they did at the end of this training entitled, "How to Use the Library". The citizens were asked to follow the instructions on the worksheet, then they received a right or wrong check. The distribution of scores was as follows; one 50%, two 60%, five 70%, one 80%, three 90%, and seven 100%. We were surprised at how well these individuals did. Very few of our citizens had the prerequisite skills to be able to learn use of the card catalog. We did not undertake this task because we felt it was not a worthwhile use of our time. A few of the higher functioning citizens were instructed as to how to look up things in dictionaries and encyclopedias. They use these occasionally often asking for staff assistance.

During the time of the grant, most of the furniture and equipment in the Citizens' Library was replaced with new, more attractive, more functional items. Drapes and carpeting were added. The appearance and efficiency of the library were greatly improved. Many of the citizens noticed these changes as they occurred. They made positive comments on these changes. See Annex G for excerpts from the observations folder on, "Citizens' Reactions to and Awareness of New Furnishings". I believe that the attractive, comfortably furnished library with all its stimulating materials combined with the supportive individual approach of the staff, created an atmosphere where the citizens came to relax and "get away from things". In some cases, abnormal behaviors declined in this setting. One day a visitor to Pennhurst asked a citizen who had been waiting quite a long time for the library to open why she liked to come to the library. Her reply was, "I like the library because I'm not nervous here; every place else makes me nervous".

Staff were permitted and encouraged to borrow materials and equipment from the Citizens' Library to use with citizens in therapy sessions and classes that they conducted. Two projects were devised as ways to increase staff usage of these services. First of all, I conducted a series of four in-service sessions for other programming staff. These in-services were an orientation to the Citizens' Library and available materials and equipment. The best example of the results was the Occupational Therapy Staff. They attended an in-service session the end of October 1976. In the eight months prior to this session their combined borrowing totaled 79 items. Following the session for eight months their combined borrowing was 265 items. Borrowing by the Occupational Therapy Dept. Staff more than tripled. There were significant increases in borrowing by other departments as well. The total staff borrowing would have increased even more significantly except for one fact. The School Program for citizens under 21 years old left the Pennhurst Center grounds in the autumn of 1976. As a result, borrowing by the teachers dropped markedly. Prior to this they were the staff who borrowed the most. See Annex A for complete staff borrowing figures throughout the grant. In addition to the in-services provided, we compiled and published a guide booklet; and distributed it to Pennhurst Center staff. See Annex H for a copy of the "Guide to Pennhurst Citizens' Library". This has been used quite successfully. In many instances, staff members will refer to items listed in the "Guide" when they are discussing possible things to borrow with us.

In the preceding paragraphs, I have discussed each of the ten objectives of the grant project and the progress that was made toward meeting each. The two general aims of the project for Pennhurst Center were fulfilled very successfully. These were to provide an appropriately adapted, public library type service to the citizens during their stay here; and to provide an atmosphere of enrichment. The two general aims of the project for the community were also successfully fulfilled. These were to acquaint citizens who might be placed in the community with libraries and how to use them as well as other public facilities; and to present community orientation information. The aim of encouraging our citizens to learn, improve or maintain reading skills was partially met. As I mentioned we did not teach anyone how to read. However, we did help citizens who had previously acquired reading skills. Before the library program began, some of these individuals had not used their reading skills for many years.

The final aim of the project was to provide information to public and institutional librarians on providing services to mentally retarded citizens and to encourage the expansion of such services. In order to fulfill this aim, we produced a slide-tape set entitled, "Mentally Retarded Citizens and Library Services". I used this presentation in addition to conducting a discussion on this subject at a series of three workshops in Pennsylvania for public librarians. These were sponsored by the Special Library Services Division of the State Library. They were held in various regions of the state. In addition, the slide-tape set has thus far been borrowed by one public and two institution libraries for presentation to staff members. The set will remain available for any library to borrow. It has been listed as a resource in a nation-wide inventory of information on library services to special patrons. Future plans to publicize the results of this grant involve preparing and submitting an article to journals for possible publication and publication of a pamphlet for distribution to interested parties. In addition, the public relations specialist for Department of Public Welfare, Southeastern Region is preparing a newspaper story with photographs for release to local papers.

Due to the success of this project and the proven value of library services as part of the total habilitation program, Pennhurst Center has picked up the Library Assistant position and will continue it under the regular complement. In addition, the Center has allotted additional space to the Citizens' Library in a building now being remodeled.

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